

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

EXCLUSIVE EYES ONLY

1972 NOV 19

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~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~ 190610Z NOV 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
FROM: AMBASSADOR SAKER SAIGON 0276 IMMEDIATE
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
REF: VHS 2251
SECTION 1 OF 2

1. I SAW THIEU THIS MORNING AND GAVE HIM LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AS CONTAINED REFTEL. THIEU READ THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER CAREFULLY, BUT AS USUAL MADE NO COMMENT. HE THEN HANDED ME LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 19 ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT, TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS IN PARAGRAPH 2.
2. THIEU SAID THAT HE WISHED TO EMPHASIZE TWO POINTS:
 - 1) ON THE MATTER OF THE NCRC THE GVN IS MAKING A CONCESSION IN AGREEING THAT BOTH SIDES SHALL HAVE EQUAL REPRESENTATION ALTHOUGH THE NLF REPRESENTS ONLY ABOUT TEN PERCENT OF THE POPULATION.
 - 2) THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF NVA TROOPS IS A VITAL MATTER FOR THE GVN. HE REALIZES IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US SINCE WE HAVE BEEN ENGAGED SO CLOSELY FOR A LONG PERIOD IN THE PRIVATE NEGOTIATIONS AND BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT HANOI HAS NEVER BEEN WILLING TO ADMIT THE PRESENCE OF THEIR TROOPS IN THE SOUTH. HE BELIEVES, THEREFORE, THAT NVA WITHDRAWAL COULD BE ACHIEVED BY THE GVN SUGGESTION FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF "NON-SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS", THUS OBTAINING THE MENTION OF NVA TROOPS IN THE SOUTH. THERE WOULD STILL REMAIN NVA TROOPS IN VC UNITS WHO NOW COMPRISE 70-80 PERCENT OF THESE UNITS; IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY THESE FILLERS EXCEPT BY "EXAMINING THEIR TEETH" (I ASKED WHETHER, LIKE HORSES, ONE COULD TELL THEIR AGE BY THE SAME PROCESS). THE GVN PROPOSES THAT ITS OWN TROOPS AND NLF FORCES ALSO BE DEMOBILIZED ON A ONE FOR ONE BASIS AND THAT THEY RETURN "TO THEIR NATIVE PLACES". I COMMENTED THAT THE NVA FILLERS WHO WOULD THEN BE DEMOBILIZED MIGHT THEN RETURN TO NORTH VIET-NAM, BUT THIEU SAID THEY WOULD NOT RETURN NORTH; THEY WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO REMAIN IN THE SOUTH, WHICH THEY WILL BE GLAD TO DO, ENJOYING A BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING HERE WHILE CARRYING ON COVERT ACTIVITIES ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM HANOI.
2. BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER:

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

DOS Review
Completed.

SAIGON, NOVEMBER 19, 1972

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 14, 1972, AND I HAVE STUDIED IT VERY CAREFULLY OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS. MY COLLABORATORS AND I HAVE GONE OVER THE REVISED DRAFT AGREEMENT AND ANALYZED THE PROPOSED CHANGES WHICH YOU HAVE SO CAREFULLY EXPLAINED TO ME IN YOUR LETTER. IN THE SPIRIT OF THE CORDIAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS, I WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY TO YOU THE CONSIDERED VIEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS WHICH WE DEEM OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM:

1. ON THE STATUS OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN SOUTH VIET NAM: WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT AS EXTERNAL FORCES, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS SHOULD BE UNAMBIGUOUSLY WITHDRAWN FROM SOUTH VIET NAM AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CEASE-FIRE.

AS HANOI DOES NOT WANT TO ADMIT OFFICIALLY THE PRESENCE OF ITS No Objection to Declassification in Full 2011/03/03 : LOC-HAK-490-9-20-6

AS I No Objection to Declassification in Full 2011/03/03 : LOC-HAK-490-9-20-6
OF ITS TROOPS IN SOUTH VIET NAM, WE SUGGEST IN ARTICLE 7 OF
OUR DRAFT AGREEMENT, WHICH WE TRANSMIT TO AMBASSADOR BUNKER
TODAY, THIS WORDING: "WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE SIGNING OF THIS
AGREEMENT, THERE WILL BE A TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH VIET NAM
OF TROOPS ... OF THE UNITED STATES AND THOSE OF THE OTHER NON
SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES".

THUS, WHILE THE IDEA OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE NORTH
VIETNAMESE TROOPS IS THERE, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IS NOT
MENTIONED BY NAME IN THE AGREEMENT.

CONCERNING THE DEMOBILIZATION OF THE OPPOSITE FORCES IN
SOUTH VIET NAM ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS, WE BELIEVE THAT THERE
SHOULD BE A MENTION THAT THE DEMOBILIZED TROOPS SHOULD RETURN
TO THEIR NATIVE PLACES, TO DEAL WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE
ARMY ELEMENTS INCORPORATED IN THE SO-CALLED VIET CONG UNITS.

THIS CONSTITUTES ALREADY A SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSION FROM
OUR SIDE BECAUSE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS, AS AGGRESSORS,
SHOULD HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN PRIOR TO THE ALLIED TROOPS. IN
THIS REGARD, MAY I RECALL THAT AT THE 7 ALLIED NATIONS SUMMIT
CONFERENCE, HELD ON MANILA IN OCTOBER 1966, THE PRINCIPLE HAS
BEEN AGREED THAT ALLIED TROOPS ARE TO BE WITHDRAWN ONLY SIX
MONTHS AFTER THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE
TROOPS TO NORTH VIET NAM.

I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE
NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS TO NORTH VIET NAM IS THE BASIC POINT
FOR THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM, AND WE CANNOT SEE HOW THERE
CAN BE AN HONORABLE PEACE IF THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE AGGRESSORS
IS NOT DEALT WITH CLEARLY, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CEASE-FIRE.

2. CONCERNING THE POLITICAL PROVISIONS, THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM CONSIDERS THAT THE FUNCTION OF THE
COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD SHOULD BE DESCRIBED
CLEARLY AS AN "ADMINISTRATIVE ORGAN IN CHARGE OF THE ELECTIONS".

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM IS WILLING
TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONCESSION IN ACCEPTING TO HAVE THE NLF
PARTICIPATE ON A 50/50 BASIS IN THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECON-
CILIATION AND CONCORD WHILE THEY CONTROL ONLY A VERY SMALL
PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION. BUT, ON THE GROUND OF PRINCIPLE,
WE CANNOT ACCEPT TO GRANT THE NLF THE STATUS OF "EQUALITY" WITH
THE LEGAL GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM. THEREFORE WE
CONSIDER THAT THE WORD "EQUALITY" AS PROPOSED IN ARTICLE 9F,
SHOULD BE DELETED.

ALSO, AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, WE
CANNOT ACCEPT THE "3 COMPONENTS" FORMULA FOR THE COUNCIL OF
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD, BECAUSE IT IS ARTIFICIAL,
IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THIS IS A POLITICAL CONTEST BETWEEN THE

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FROM: AMBASSADOR BUNKER SAIGON 0276 IMMEDIATE
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
FINAL SECTION OF TWO

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM AND THE NLF, AND NOT A THREE-CORNERED CONTEST.

3. AS REGARDS THE COMPOSITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION, WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT ITS COMPOSITION, AS CONTEMPLATED IN THE PRESENT DRAFT, IS SERIOUSLY IMBALANCED BY THE MEMBERSHIP OF TWO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, POLAND AND HUNGARY, BECAUSE IT ASSURES IN ADVANCE AT LEAST 50 PER CENT OF THE VOTES FOR THE COMMUNIST SIDE.

THIS WILL HAVE VERY GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM BECAUSE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION WILL UNDERTAKE NOT ONLY THE SUPERVISION OF THE CEASE-FIRE, BUT ALSO THE SUPERVISION OF THE ELECTIONS WHICH WILL DETERMINE THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF SOUTH VIET NAM.

THEREFORE, WE PROPOSE THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION BE COMPOSED OF 4 NEUTRALS, AND SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES: AUSTRIA, CANADA, FINLAND, AND SWITZERLAND.

THE REASON WHY WE GIVE PRIORITY TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED COUNTRIES OVER INDONESIA IS THAT, LIKE INDIA, INDONESIA HAS EXCHANGED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIET NAM WHILE IT HAS REFUSED SO FAR TO ESTABLISH SIMILAR RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM.

4. ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE CONVENED AFTER THE CEASE-FIRE, WE FEEL THAT ITS USEFULNESS WILL BE FULLY JUSTIFIED ONLY IF IT IS HELD AFTER A CEASE-FIRE HAS BEEN ALSO CONCLUDED IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA, SINCE ITS ESSENTIAL ROLE IS TO GUARANTEE PEACE IN INDOCHINA.

BESIDES, LAOS AND CAMBODIA LOGICALLY SHOULD BE FULL PARTICIPANTS AT THE CONFERENCE. WE DO NOT THINK THAT THERE ARE SERIOUS PROBLEMS ON THE DELEGATIONS OF THESE TWO COUNTRIES, BECAUSE IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE LEGAL GOVERNMENT IN LAOS AS WELL AS IN CAMBODIA.

5. ON THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE AGREEMENT, WE BELIEVE THAT IT SHOULD LAY DOWN OBLIGATIONS FOR BOTH SIDES, AND NOT ONLY ON THE VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION.

BOTH SIDES IN THIS CONFLICT, NORTH VIET NAM AS WELL AS SOUTH VIET NAM, HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT PEACE IN INDOCHINA SHOULD BE RESTORED ON THE BASIS OF THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF THE 1954 AND 1962 GENEVA AGREEMENTS. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM CONSIDERS THAT THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF THE 1954 GENEVA AGREEMENT ON VIET NAM SHOULD BE REESTABLISHED IN THE RE

THAT IT SHOULD LAY DOWN OBLIGATIONS FOR BOTH SIDES, AND NOT ONLY ON THE VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION.

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I AM CONVINCED THAT THE ABOVE POINTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO A JUST, HONORABLE AND DURABLE PEACE. WE HAVE BEEN FIGHTING THIS WAR FOR SELF-DEFENSE FOR OVER A DECADE AND HAVE MADE ENORMOUS SACRIFICES IN THIS STRUGGLE. IN ALL CANDOR, I DO NOT COMPREHEND WHY THE BASIC PRINCIPLES WHICH FOR YEARS WE HAVE HELD AS INDISPENSABLE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GENUINE PEACE SHOULD BE NOW SACRIFICED JUST TO MEET CERTAIN CLOSE DEADLINES WHICH THE ENEMY HAS IMPOSED ON US, OR WHICH WE HAVE IMPOSED ON OURSELVES.

NO PEOPLE ARE LONGING FOR PEACE MORE THAN OUR TWO PEOPLES, AND I AM MOST ANXIOUS TO BRING PEACE TO MY PEOPLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, PUBLIC OPINION AND HISTORY WILL JUDGE US ON THE KIND OF PEACE WHICH WE SHALL BRING ABOUT.

MR. PRESIDENT,

I DO NOT THINK THAT I CAN ADEQUATELY EXPLAIN TO YOU THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM'S VIEWPOINTS THROUGH LETTERS AND MEMORANDA. I PROPOSE THEREFORE TO SEND TO YOU A SPECIAL EMISSARY TO CONVEY TO YOU IN GREATER DETAIL THE VIEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM ON THE PEACE SETTLEMENT. IT IS MY EARNEST HOPE THAT YOU WOULD GIVE A FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO THIS PROPOSAL. IN VIEW OF ITS VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM, WE FEEL THAT OUR VIEWS DESERVE TO BE HEARD IN FULL. THEREFORE, I SHALL APPRECIATE IT GREATLY IF, TO THAT EFFECT, YOU WOULD ACCEPT AS MY SPECIAL EMISSARY, EITHER FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN VAN LAM, OR MY SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DR. NGUYEN PHU DUC, AT YOUR CONVENIENCE.

MADAME THIEU JOINS ME IN EXTENDING TO MRS. NIXON AND YOU OUR WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS AND OUR BEST WISHES FOR CONTINUED GOOD HEALTH.

SINCERELY,
/S/ THIEU

HIS EXCELLENCY RICHARD M. NIXON
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON D.C.

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